(b) and (c) No, Sir. The service is not currently available. However, the service in the four metro cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras is expected to start during 1995, and

(d) Karnataka circle, including Banglore, is being covered in the 2nd Phase for which tenders have been already invited for franchise of the service.

Poor Postal Distribution System in Madhya Pradesh

388. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that postal distribution system in the rural areas of Madhya Pradesh is very poor and letters, money orders and other postal articles are delivered very late in such areas; and

(b) if so, what remedial action Government propose to take to improve the postal distribution system in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Madhya Pradesh being a very large state, its rural areas are far flung and often remote. Mail arrangements are dependent on available transport facilities. Generally, mails are lelivered in time but delays do occur due to late running or cancellation of trains or busses and otrer surh circumstances beyond the control of the Department.

(b) Following steps are being taken for improvement:

(i) A continous review is undertaken to effect improvements whenever possible on introduction of new bus service or trains.

(ii) The transmission and sorting of mail is constantly monitored at supervisory and administrative levels and remedial steps ensured to avoid delays.

(iii) Mail arrangements are also being constantly monitored by posting test letters at various levels to pinpoint bottlenecks for remedial acion.

Private participation in Telcom Services

389. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the new Telecom Policy envisages a role for Private sector companies including a minimum foreign equity component of 10 per cent in order to supplement the DoTs efforts to meet the target of telephone on demand by 1997, as well as connecting every village of this country with telephones by the same time; and

(b) whether private participation in basic telecom services is meant to ensure a supplementary role to achieve this target; if so, what would be the function of the private telecome companies after 1997?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No Sir. However for the purpose of counting the experience and networth of a partner company, such company should have a minimum of 10 per cent equity in the bidder company.

(b) Supplementary role of private sector will continue as demand for telephones will also continue to grow.

Rejection of Joshi Committee Recommedations by DOT

390. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Telecommunications has rejected the recommendations of the Joshi

Committee regarding limiting the maximum time span of pilot projects to twelve months in so far as the latest letter of intent to M|s. U. S. West India is concerned: and

(b) if so, what are the techno-economic consideration for such a decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) No Sir. Duration of pilot projects depends upon the type of technology to be proved. As such, time span will vary from case to case.

Intra-Circle STD and long distance trunk services

391. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the nomenclature-'Intra-Circle' STD which finds mention in the tender documents for basic telecom services, is a new concept which was not there in the New Telecom Policy document;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the New Telecom Policy did not envisage the opening of STD and long distance trunk services to the private operators, irrespective of whether they are 'intra-circle' or 'inter-circle;" and

(c) if so, what are the considerations for such a deperture from the NTP?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (c) Sir, Guidelines on the National Telecom Policy envisage that the private operators will be allowed to set up long distance network within a circle. As such, the STD calls within the circle between the operators subscribers can be conveyed over operators network.

Malfunctioning of Telephone Services in Dhanbad

392. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaints about the malfunctioning of telephone services in and around Dhanbad District of Bihar;

(b) if so, what action has been taken so far;

(c) whether looking into the gravity of the situation, Government would order a public inquiry by an impartial authority into the functioning of telephone services in Dhanbad; and

(d) if not, what measures Government propose to take so that telephone services in Dhanbad District work to the satisfaction of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The old strowger exchanges have been replaced by Electronic Exchanges at Saraidhele, Dhanbad ad Chirunda.

(c) The services have now improved after replacement of old exchanges. As such, no investigation is necessary.

(d) Does not arise, in view of (c) above.

Speed Post services in Maharashtra

393. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the speed post services in Maharashtra are running in losses:

(b) if so, what is being done to better the speed post services;

(c) if not, what is the profit earned during the last three years on the speed post services in Maharashtra;